

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## 1) How do I determine if the injury/illness occurred in the work environment?

The following examples are for situations where an injury or illness occurs in the work environment and is **NOT** considered work related:

- + At the time of the injury or illness, the *employee was present* in the work environment as a *member of the general public* rather than as an employee.
- + The injury or illness involves signs or symptoms that surface at work but *result solely* from a non-work-related event or exposure that *occurs outside the work environment*.
- + The injury or illness results *solely from voluntary participation* in a wellness program or in a medical, fitness, or recreational activity such as blood donation, physical examination, flu shot, exercise class, racquetball, or baseball.
- + The injury or illness is solely the result of *an employee eating, drinking, or preparing food or drink for personal consumption* (whether bought on the employer's premises or brought in). For example, if the employee is injured by choking on a sandwich while in the employer's establishment, the case would not be considered work-related. **Note:** If the employee is made ill by ingesting food contaminated by workplace contaminants (such as lead), or gets food poisoning from food supplied by the employer, the case would be considered work-related.
- + The injury or illness is solely the result of an *employee doing personal tasks* (unrelated to their employment) at the establishment outside of the employee's assigned working hours.
- + The injury or illness is solely the result of *personal grooming, self-medication for a non-work-related condition, or is intentionally self-inflicted*.
- + The injury or illness is *caused by a motor vehicle accident and occurs on a company parking lot or company access road while the employee is commuting to or from work*.
- + The illness is the *common cold or flu* (Note: contagious diseases such as tuberculosis, brucellosis, hepatitis A, or plague are considered work-related if the employee is infected at work).
- + The illness is *a mental illness*. Mental illness will not be considered work-related unless the employee voluntarily provides the employer with an opinion from a physician or other licensed health care professional with appropriate training and experience (psychiatrist, psychologist, psychiatric nurse practitioner, etc.) stating that the employee has a mental illness that is work-related.

## 2) How do I determine if it is recordable if the employee is in travel status?

Injuries or illnesses that occur when the employee is on travel status do not have to be recorded if they meet one of the exceptions listed below.


- ✚ When a traveling employee *checks into* a hotel, motel, or into any other temporary residence, he or she establishes a "*home away from home*." You must evaluate the employee's activities after he or she checks into the hotel, motel, or other temporary residence for their work-relatedness in the same manner as you evaluate the activities of a non-traveling employee. When the employee checks into the temporary residence, he or she is considered to have left the work environment. When the employee begins work each day, he or she re-enters the work environment. If the employee has established a "home away from home" and is *reporting to a fixed worksite each day*, you also do not consider injuries or illnesses work-related if they occur while the employee is commuting between the temporary residence and the job location.
- ✚ Injuries or illnesses are not considered work-related if they occur while the employee is on a *personal detour* from a reasonably direct route of travel (*e.g.*, has taken a side trip for personal reasons).

## 3) What is considered First Aid treatment?

Do **NOT** report if injury or illness was treated by the following First Aid terms:

- ✚ Using a non-prescription medication at nonprescription strength (for medications available in both prescription and non-prescription form, a recommendation by a physician or other licensed health care professional to use a non-prescription medication at prescription strength is considered medical treatment for recordkeeping purposes)
- ✚ Administering tetanus immunizations
- ✚ Cleaning, flushing or soaking wounds on the surface of the skin
- ✚ Using wound coverings such as bandages, Band-Aids™, gauze pads, etc.; or using butterfly bandages or Steri-Strips™ (other wound closing devices such as sutures, staples, etc., are considered medical treatment)
- ✚ Using hot or cold therapy
- ✚ Using any non-rigid means of support, such as elastic bandages, wraps, non-rigid back belts, etc. (devices with rigid stays or other systems designed to immobilize parts of the body are considered medical treatment for recordkeeping purposes)
- ✚ Using temporary immobilization devices while transporting an accident victim (e.g., splints, slings, neck collars, back boards, etc.)
- ✚ Drilling of a fingernail or toenail to relieve pressure, or draining fluid from a blister
- ✚ Using eye patches
- ✚ Removing foreign bodies from the eye using only irrigation or a cotton swab
- ✚ Removing splinters or foreign material from areas other than the eye by irrigation, tweezers, cotton swabs or other simple means
- ✚ Using finger guards
- ✚ Using massages (physical therapy or chiropractic treatment are considered medical treatment for recordkeeping purposes)
- ✚ Drinking fluids for relief of heat stress

#### 4) How do I count work hours that are not based on an average 40 hour work week?

 Work schedules in the United States are generally viewed as consisting of an 8-hour day and a 40-hour week. But the National Survey Compensation <http://bls.gov/opub/cwc/print/cm20080722ar01p1.htm> covers many occupations that have different types of work schedules: fire fighters, for example, who often work 24 straight hours followed by 48 hours off; truck drivers, many of whom spend days at a time on the road; waiters and waitresses, whose schedules may vary every week; and school teachers, who tend to work many hours at home. Fitting all of these different schedules into a common form for data publication can be challenging.

#### Do I need to count only regular work hours? What about overtime?

You should count the number of regular & overtime hours worked by all employees. You should exclude vacation, sick leave, holidays, and any other non-work time (i.e. breaks).

#### Most of our employees are salaried (not hourly) workers, how do we count their total hours worked?

The hours worked is the measure that we use to determine the frequency rate of work-related injuries & illnesses. If the exact number of hours actually worked is not available, then a reasonable estimate is an acceptable substitute (2000 hours can be used for a 40-hour work week employee).

#### We are a school. How do we complete the survey? Is it for the school year or calendar year? How would I figure the hours?

The survey for schools is for the calendar year, just like any other employer. Consider how many days the school district is contracted during the school year.

You can use the formula  $(\# \text{ of days}) \times (\# \text{ of hours}) \times (\# \text{ of employees}) = \text{Total Hours}$

#### We are a trucking industry. How would we determine the number of hours worked for the year?

We understand that some employers in the trucking industry have difficulty in estimating the number of hours worked by employees, specifically truck drivers. Many truck drivers are paid by miles, or by delivery route, making it difficult to calculate the actual number of hours worked. Use the following formula to find an acceptable number of hours worked.

	_____	The number of miles driven
+	_____	Estimated average miles per hour
=	_____	Hours worked driving
+	_____	Estimated hours worked other than driving
=	_____	Total estimated hours worked

If your establishment does not record the hours worked or the number of miles driven by truck drivers, but does maintain accurate records on a similar factor (i.e., number of routes driven), you can estimate the number of hours worked using a method similar to the one above. If you need further assistance, please call the phone number on the front of the form.

## The following Considerations & Links may also help:

- + If injury & illnesses experienced during a particular activity are recordable, then the employee's time spent in the activity should be included in the "hours worked" estimate.
- + If an employee experiences an injury or illness while driving a truck route or while loading or unloading the truck, it is **considered work-related** for OSHA Recordkeeping purposes.
- + If a truck driver experiences an injury or illness while sleeping in a truck sleeper berth, the injury or illness is **not considered work-related** for OSHA Recordkeeping purposes.
- + If a truck driver experiences an injury or illness while sleeping in a motel or hotel, the injury or illness is **not considered work-related** for OSHA Recordkeeping purposes.
- + If a truck driver experiences an injury or illness while stopped at a truck stop facility to eat or bathe, the injury or illness is **not considered work-related** for OSHA Recordkeeping purposes.
- + Record keeping Advisor walks you through the steps <http://webapps.dol.gov/elaws/osha/recordkeeping/02.aspx>
- + How to compute a firm's incidence rate <http://www.bls.gov/iif/osheval.htm>